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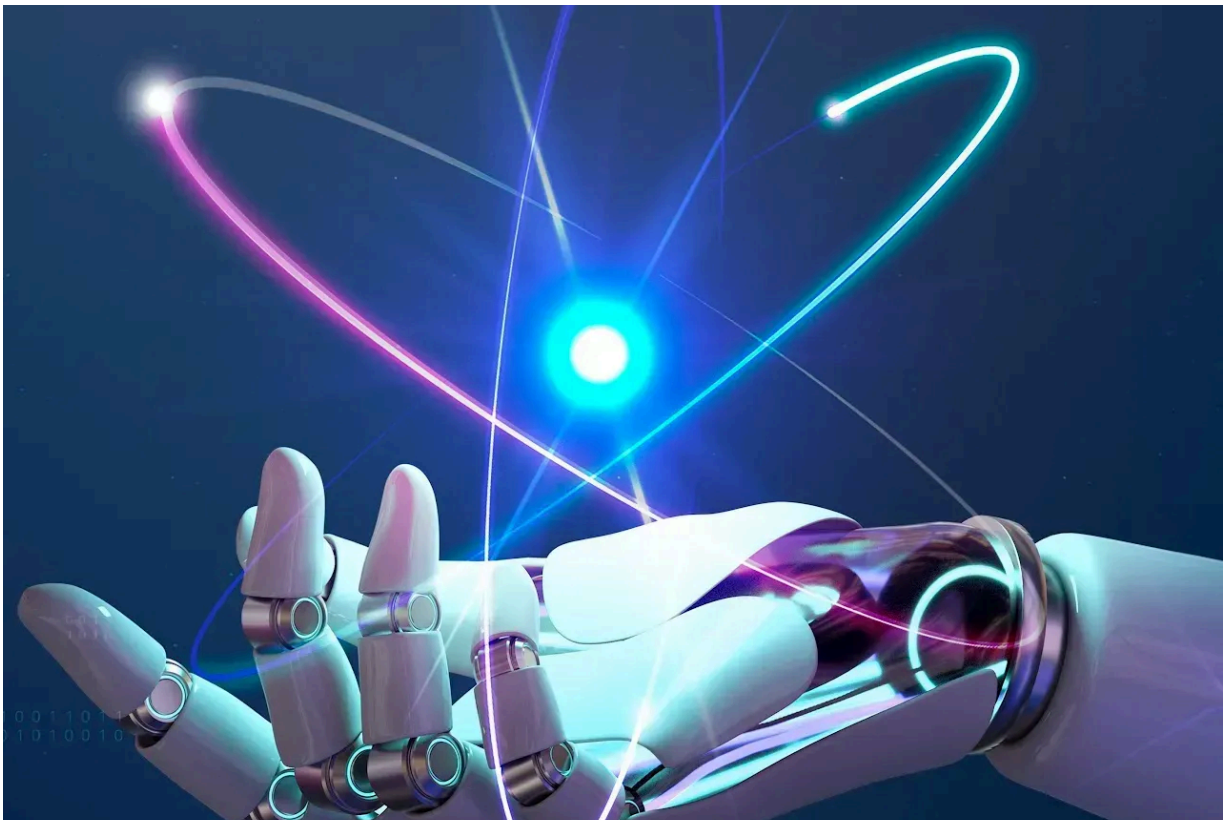
JENKS SCIENCE AND TECH TALKS

Jenks forum discusses artificial intelligence

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

October 5, 2024 . 12:43 PM — 2 min read



By Ron Latanision, John Brown, and Walter Hubbard

We led off our new Wilson Forum season in September with *An Introduction to and Test Drive of Generative AI*, developed by Marv Goldschmitt of AIUpdate, Paula McConnell of Seva Digital and Innovation

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Toronto's Ron Smith. This session began with Marv's insightful history of AI and its meteoric evolution into virtually every aspect of life on our small planet. At this stage of history, it seems that few people have had any direct experience with this technology.

Our speakers consider it important that everyone should have such an opportunity and make judgments on the value of this technology for themselves as it is likely to impact them directly. A test drive of an experiential chatbot agent, Upa, designed to introduce non-technical people to this new reality was attempted with a few volunteers.

GenAI has the potential to be supremely useful but also supremely abusive (personal, socially, culturally). One might hope that lessons learned from the history of the Internet and The Web may help lead to a responsible and accountable advance of AI into our social fabric. The session concluded with a remarkable and informative Q&A.

Semantic Search in Generative AI. Later in September, Bernhard Suhm, Principal, USpeakAI, extended the conversation. He spoke on *Transforming Search Experiences with Semantic Search*. The landscape of information retrieval has undergone a paradigm shift with the advent of semantic search technologies. Traditional keyword-based search methods often yielded inconsistent results, requiring users to navigate through extensive lists of documents to locate pertinent information.

Semantic search, by leveraging natural language processing and machine learning algorithms, has significantly enhanced the relevance and accuracy of information retrieval. As a result, semantic search has markedly reduced the cognitive load on users, by delivering more relevant answers. The emergence of large language models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT brought AI and semantic retrieval into prominence. However, this technological advancement didn't come without challenges, whi described.

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These presentations led to a discussion of how Generative AI has impacted our lives, and what concerns this technology raises for society at large going forward. The changes in AI that began in November 2022 with Generative AI are remarkable. GenAI is not any new technology. This one is shattering.

It is likely that to the average thoughtful person, the telephone must have been shattering. Just as the Model T. What is different is the case of GenAI is that it does not just add a new dimension to our lives, it presents technology as a force beyond nature. It allegedly thinks and feels though it is not clear on what scale and in what detail it compares to human thinking. But we don't really understand the particulars of how humans think. A genuine concern is that technology may be heading so far out front of humans that people may begin to distrust science and technology on a level that is unprecedented today.

UPCOMING LECTURES: On October 11, the speakers who met with us in September will rejoin us in an open conversation about the advances and challenges represented by Generative AI. And on October 25, Ken Pruitt, Sustainability Director for the Town of Winchester will speak on *Winchester's Sustainability Planning*.

All Wilson Science & Technology Forum presentations are recorded and can be streamed free on demand at the Wilson Forum's website.

WinCAM broadcasts recordings of Forum presentations at 3 pm on Mondays and Fridays. For the schedule, go to https://wincam.org/schedule/education/ and search for "Wilson."

The Wilson Forum's meetings are via Zoom, at 10:30 am on the second and fourth Fridays of each month, with the exception of a summer hol
July and August.

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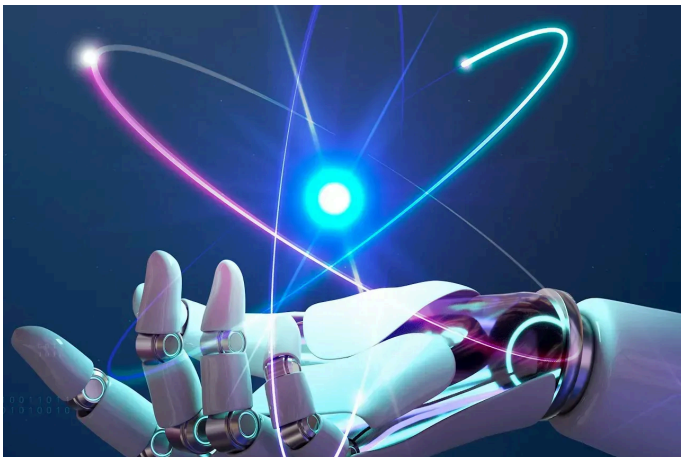

JENKS SCIENCE AND TECH TALKS

Jenks Science and Tech Talks - on truth and the purposes of government

By Ron Latanision and John Brown On November 14, author Joe Simonetta spoke about the truth, which is under siege in our contemporary world; and on November 28th Wilson Forum Historian Vincent Dixon spoke about a central debate of our time, the purposes and evolution of government. By Ron Latanision

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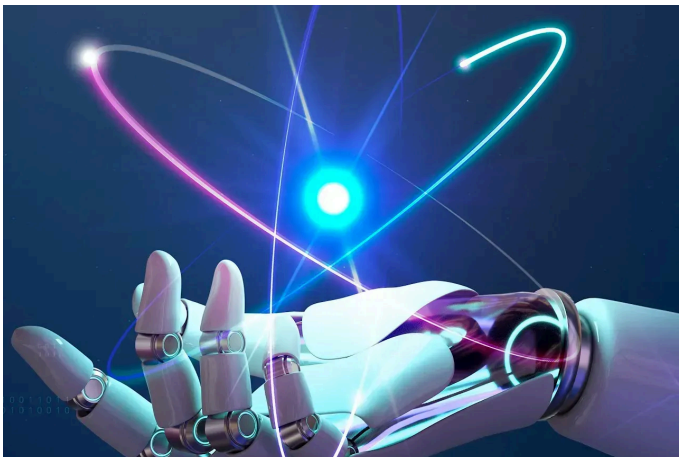
December 11, 2025



JENKS SCIENCE AND TECH TALKS

Jenks Science & Tech Talks discusses AI and spent nuclear waste

The Wilson Science & Technology Forum at The Jenks Center in Winchester By Ron Latanision and John Brown Tales from the AI Frontier On October 10, Dr. Eddie Robins spoke about the human-machine interface in the expanding presence of artificial intelligence (AI) in our lives. The rapidity with which AI

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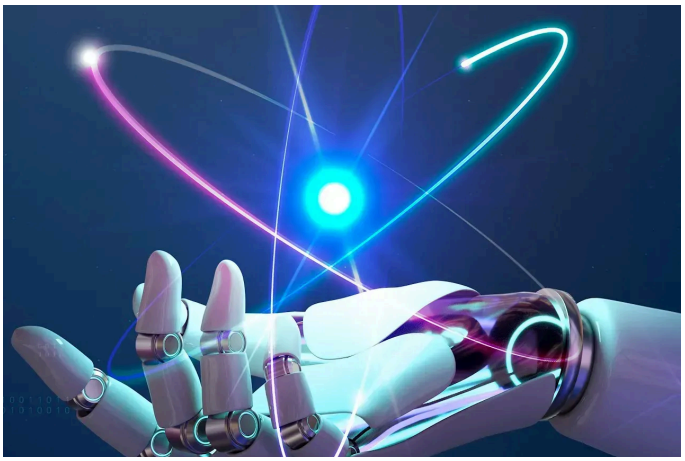
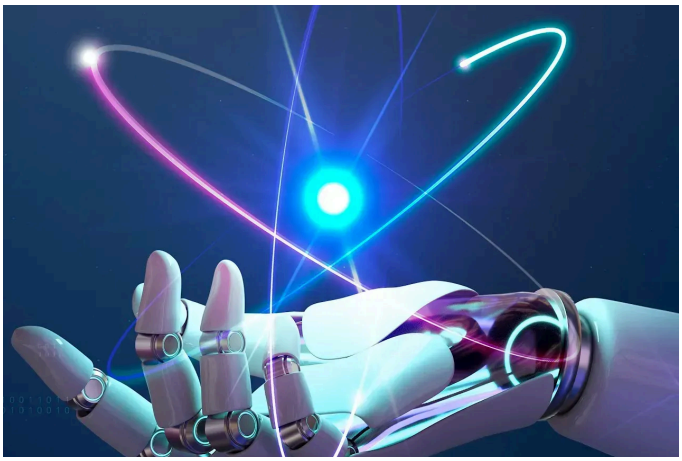
November 15, 2025



JENKS SCIENCE AND TECH TALKS

Jenks Science and Technology Forum discusses managing risks



JENKS SCIENCE AND TECH TALKS

Science and Technol Jenks - AI talk and

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in emerging tech, plus quantum computers

By Ron Latanisian In September, Michael Garjian spoke about An Alternative to Corporate Capitalism in Managing the Socio-economic Risks of Emerging Technologies and Jagadeesh Moodera spoke about The Evolution of Quantum Computers An Alternative to Corporate Capitalism The introduction of any new technology into the marketplace and into our social

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

October 5, 2025

Superconductors

By Ron Latanision, John Brown, and Walter Hubbard In June, Marv Goldschmitt added the perspective of a technological philosopher to The Artificial Intelligence Revolution and Professor Amit Goyal spoke about High Temperature Superconductors Artificial Intelligence - Wrap Up for the 2024-2025 Forum Season On June 27, our season wrap-up, The

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July 23, 2025

Latest

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EVENTS

Celebrate Women's History Month with Girls Leading Change

The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: To mark Women's History Month and International Women's Day in 2026, the Network for Social Justice is collaborating with club leaders from Winchester High School and members of the Community Health team from La Colaborativa in Chelsea and

March 4, 2026

NEWS

Winchester School Committee candidates bring contrasting backgrounds to Thursday forum

Two candidates for Winchester's School Committee will face voters at a forum as the district navigates a new literacy curriculum, budget pressures and questions about student mental health. Heather von Mering and John Bellaire are competing for an open seat on the School Committ oversees a budget von

WILL DOWD | STAFF WRITER

March 4, 2026

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FEATURES

‘Chicago: Teen Edition’ dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents “Chicago: Teen Edition,” a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. This iconic production is set in the 1920s. Performances will take place on March 13 and 14

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS
March 4, 2026

EVENTS

Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents ‘Syldason: You Are Welcome Here’

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

March 4, 2026

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